

CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for securing an object to a vehicle, comprising:
 - 2 a mounting bracket;
 - 4 a mating unit removably connected to the mounting bracket, the mating unit comprising:
 - 6 an adjustable shackle;
 - 8 a mating portion, the mating portion being fixedly secured to said adjustable shackle; and
 - 10 a locking mechanism, the locking mechanism operative to allow adjustment of said shackle in an unlocked position and to prevent adjustment of said shackle in a locked position; and
 - 12 means for removably securing the mating portion to the mounting bracket.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the means for removably securing the mating portion to the mounting bracket is inaccessible after the object is secured by the adjustable shackle.
3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the means for securing comprise a retaining pin, a first aperture located on the mounting bracket, and a second aperture located on the mating unit, wherein the first aperture and the second aperture are aligned with each other and the retaining pin is inserted into the first and second apertures, thereby maintaining the mounting bracket and the mating unit in a fixed relationship with each other.
4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the mounting bracket further comprises a slotted lower surface and the mating unit further comprises a tabbed lower surface, the tabbed lower surface for insertion into the slotted lower surface.
5. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the retaining pin is inaccessible when the object is secured through an opening formed by the adjustable shackle.
6. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a fin guard for covering a fin removal mechanism on the object and for preventing access to the fin removal mechanism.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the mounting bracket comprises a rear planar surface for mounting to the vehicle, an upper portion connected to the rear planar surface, and a lower portion connected to the rear planar surface, the upper portion and the lower portion for receiving the mating unit.
8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the mounting bracket comprises:
 - 2 a U-shaped bracket;
 - 4 a receiving block; andmeans for fixedly securing the U-shaped bracket around a vehicle roof rack.
9. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:
 - 2 a cushion, the cushion comprising a surface substantially conforming to a cross-section of an edge of the object, the cushion secured to the adjustable shackle.
10. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mounting bracket comprises:
 - 2 a lower bracket comprising a first aperture for receiving a retaining pin;
 - 4 a lower insert for mounting within the lower bracket and comprising a second aperture for receiving the retaining pin;
 - 6 an upper insert for mounting within an extrusion and comprising a third aperture for receiving the retaining pin;
 - 8 the extrusion comprising a fourth aperture for receiving the retaining pin; andmeans for fixedly securing the extrusion, the lower bracket, the lower insert, and the upper insert around a vehicle roof rack.
11. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the object comprises a surfboard.
12. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the object comprises a snowboard.
13. A method for securing an object to a vehicle, comprising:
 - 2 installing a mounting bracket fixedly to the vehicle;
 - 4 removably attaching a mating unit to the mounting bracket, the mating unit comprising an adjustable shackle operative to secure said object to said mating unit;
 - 6 placing said object through an opening formed by said shackle;
 - 8 adjusting said shackle to fit snugly against opposing edges of said object;and

locking said shackle.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising installing a fin guard over a removable fin on the surfboard, the fin guard for preventing access to a fin removal mechanism.
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15. The method of claim 13, wherein the object comprises a surfboard.
16. The method of claim 13, wherein the object comprises a snowboard.